

MINING

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

Two years ago the minister promised regulatory reform to help industry in Canada. Last December he tabled a report in the House in which he offered specific changes to the mining industry in order to help it some time in 1995.

Will the minister table those reforms now, soon or can the mining industry expect something in its stocking by Christmas?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry and I are working very closely with the mining sector to ensure an efficient regulatory system.

Last Thursday my department organized in co-operation with the Mining Association of Canada a regulatory reform workshop which brought together representatives of the Minister of Industry's department, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Department of Transport.

Very constructive recommendations came out of that day-long workshop which we will be working on to ensure that the regulatory regime supports and does not interfere with a viable, productive mining industry.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think the day-long workshop is already a two-year workshop. We need action more than just words.

New regulations being considered by the environment department have scared officials within the Minister of Natural Resources' own department so badly that they have leaked a 75-page memo to the press saying, among other things, they are scared to death of what this will do. It may harm the Canadian economy, inflame federal-provincial relations and may even affect Canadian sovereignty.

Will the minister table that 75-page memo in the House and does she share the concern of her officials?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member that neither my officials nor I are scared in relation to what I think he is referring to, the recommendations of the standing committee on the environment.

My commitment as Minister of Natural Resources is to work collaboratively, co-operatively with my colleagues, the Ministers of the Environment, Industry, Fisheries and Oceans, and Transport. At this point I am willing to go on record to the minister that working together we will ensure a regulatory regime that supports the mining industry.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Despite the efforts made by the government to keep bad news under wraps until the day after the referendum, we know that unemployment insurance and old age pensions will be affected considerably by federal government cuts.

• (1450)

When the Minister of Finance states that a no will make it possible for Canada to continue to evolve since change is already underway, as he says, is he giving us confirmation that Canada will continue to evolve along the path of cuts to education, health, unemployment insurance, old age pensions on which it has already set out?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all the Minister of Human Resources Development has indicated very clearly with respect to the whole consultation process on unemployment insurance that it is far from finished, but that our objective is employment insurance, i.e. getting Canadians back to work. That is, moreover, the goal of his reform.

On the other hand, concerning old age security, the Prime Minister has already stated very clearly here in the House that the federal government will never, never do anything to compromise the economic security of our seniors.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit that the federal government's choice to transfer its enormous deficit to the provinces by cutting Canada social transfer payments promises nothing positive for the future if Quebec were to say no, for Ottawa will be the one to set the national standards and Quebec will have to manage as best as it can to apply them, with consequences one can well imagine for social programs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): First of all, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Canada social transfer, it is very clear that the national standards involved are the principles of health insurance, to which Quebecers strongly subscribe. Secondly, a great deal of flexibility has been built in to allow the provinces leeway for innovation and for tailoring their programs to their own population.

As for dollar figures, the difference between today and the first year will be \$350 million, or less than 1 per cent of Quebec's revenue.